

**Date of submission:**

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**Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF11**

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**Regional/Sub-regional Organization/Process:**

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**General Information**

The multi-year programme of work – MYPOW (2007–2015) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) sets a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. Since its eighth session in 2009 the Forum has solicited inputs from relevant regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes as an integral part of session deliberations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the parent body of the Forum, through its resolution 2006/49, agreed to “Strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes, with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective

The eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11) will be held from 4 to 15 May 2015 in New York. In accordance with the Forum's MYPOW, the overall theme of UNFF11 is *Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward on the international arrangement on forests (IAF)*, with the following sub themes:

1. Reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options
2. Reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (hereinafter referred to as the "Forest Instrument")
3. Reviewing the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

In completing this questionnaire, you may choose to extract the relevant information and include it in your submission, if information is already available in existing reports and/or documents. Otherwise, you may provide the reference or document itself to the UNFF Secretariat, indicating the relevant section. Please note that the Year 2007 – the year of the adoption of the Forest Instrument (2007), should be used as a baseline throughout the document.

Moreover, in view of the limitation of sizing of the pertinent Secretary-General's report, the Forum Secretariat suggests no more than 250 words of written input per answer. We would be most grateful if you could send your inputs to **[unff@un.org](mailto:unff@un.org)**, fax: +1 917-367-3186, by **30 September 2014**. In light of time constraints and financial limitations, you are kindly asked to provide your input in English.

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implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.”  
(paragraph 2)

## **Introduction:**

Since its establishment in 1947, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has become the largest regional international organization in the Pacific. As a result of the restructuring of various regional agencies in the Pacific, a “new SPC” has been created with strong comparative advantages in many of the technical and scientific areas that are critical to the Pacific region. SPC now has seven divisions with a total staff complement of more than 600 based at its Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, its regional offices in Suva, Fiji, and Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, and in the Solomon Islands Country Office in Honiara.

SPC has strengthened further its commitment and vision for the region, that is, “*a secure and prosperous Pacific Community whose people are educated and healthy and manage their resources in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way*”. It has also created new opportunities to develop integrated solutions to cross-cutting regional challenges, such as climate change, food and water security, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, that impact on Pacific Island communities and governments. SPC works across more than 20 different sectors and seeks to leverage added impact through the depth of work made possible by a regional, multi-sector approach.

Its membership includes the 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and its four founding members, namely; Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States. The PICTS include: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna. The Pacific Community covers no less than one third of the global area.

The Land Resources Division (LRD), one of the seven technical divisions of SPC, is currently undergoing some re-structuring to further enhance its effectiveness in better responding to the needs of, and strengthen its focus on delivering improved services to, the member countries. The Division has moved away from its flat structure, focusing on seven thematic teams, to four main programmes, namely: Strategic Planning and Policy, Food and Nutritional Security, Sustainable Resource Management, and Trade and Agribusiness. Each of the programmes will deliver one of the four objectives of the Division’s current strategic plan for 2013 – 2017. This programmatic approach will better facilitate a more effective integration in the way the Division will be delivering its services relating to land, agriculture and forestry.

The Strategic Plan of LRD for 2013-2017 has two medium term outcomes under its newly formed Sustainable Resource Management Programme, namely: 1. Increased capacity for sustainable land (SLM) and sustainable forest management (SFM), and: 2. National and regional capacity to mitigate and adapt climate change and to respond to disasters for land, agriculture and forest resources developed and strengthened. The main focus is on the continuing building and enhancing of capacities of SPC member countries to be able to manage its land, agriculture and forestry resources in a sustainable manner.

The governance structure for LRD continues to include bi-annual meetings of agriculture and forestry officials to review and endorse implementation of the division's strategic plan. A 4-yearly Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry meeting provides the political endorsement to the LRD work programmes and focus.

## **Section I: Progress towards the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the GOFs as well as the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs**

### **A. Progress towards implementation of the Forest Instrument**

1. Briefly describe actions (e.g. regulatory, financial/economic and informational/educational) taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process to foster political commitment for sustainable forest management (SFM).

Support member countries in building and enhancing their capacities towards the sustainable management of their forests. Actions are taken at the regional, sub-regional, national and community levels, and include those supporting policies, legislations and plans, codes of practice, establishment of community-based forestry, and education and awareness programmes. These programmes are presented, discussed and endorsed at the agriculture and forestry officials' bi-annual meetings and also at the 4-yearly Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry meeting.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

Main challenges include lack of capacities and other resources, and the increasing pressure on limited land areas to satisfy the development aspiration of an increasing population.

2. Briefly describe efforts taken at the regional level to foster economically, socially and environmentally sound measures that act as incentives for the sustainable management of forests.

A number of regional activities have been implemented in the area of policy analysis and formulation, and in improved practices that add value to national efforts towards sustainable forest management.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

One of the main challenges included the difficulty in integrating regional initiatives into national programmes because of lack of resources, both funding and human resources. A main lesson learnt is the need for good national leadership that is best able to mobilise the required resources from partners and other agencies which are also involved in forestry to support the achievement of national outcomes.

3. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to promote international trade in forest products from sustainably managed forests harvested.

Organize Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry and officials meetings where regional cooperation is discussed and agreed. Provide support to regional sub-grouping such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group, members of which are the main countries which deal with trade in timber and timber products.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

Main challenge is the overreliance on log exports by some of the countries which is causing unsustainable harvesting of their forests.

4. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to address illicit international trafficking in forest products through the promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance.

Presently working with one country to strengthen capacity to trade in legally sourced sandalwood. This will be a model for other Pacific island countries which are trading in sandalwood. The ultimate aim is to establish a regional framework under which the countries involved will be able to work together to ensure that sandalwood from the Pacific is certified as being legally sourced.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

Introducing a 'chain of custody' system is new to most countries in the Pacific. It will require a lot of education, training and awareness for the system to work. It will also need to be simple, practical and cost effective. But without this, black markets will continue to thrive which would totally destroy the sector in the future.

5. List and briefly describe activities aimed at mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for SFM.

Currently implementing three regional REDD+ projects which are providing new sources of funding to support countries towards SFM. Grant financing from REDD+ projects has enabled project countries to implement programmes that they have not been able to implement up to now for lack of resources e.g. forest inventory, revised policies and legislations, training of staff, etc.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

Main challenge is the lack of capacity to implement project activities, given the high standards being demanded by REDD+. It will be totally unrealistic for the small Pacific island countries to meet some of these even with the resources provided by the projects. Also, most of the SPC member countries, because they are small cannot, on their own, access REDD + financing despite the fact that they have forests which are vital to the well-being of their communities, especially in adapting to climate change. We have pursued a regional approach with some success.

## **B. Progress towards the achievement of the GOFs**

1. Please describe actions taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process and/or by other major stakeholders in your region/sub-region to help achieve the following:

GOF1, “Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation”

Main actions include implementation of REDD+ projects, promoting conservation and effective management of FGRs, promotion of agroforestry and implementing a reforestation project to protect upland areas, rehabilitate degraded slopes and stream banks and provide income to communities.

GOF2, “Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people”

Establish and support community-based forestry projects, including the REDD+ pilot areas. Reforestation project mentioned above will provide income and other sources of livelihoods for the communities concerned.

GOF3, “Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests”

Working together with FAO in supporting a GEF-PAS project on protected areas in a number of Pacific island countries. The focus is on ensuring that sustainable land use practices are applied on the margins of the targeted forest to reduce the pressure on farmers/communities to clear new forests.

GOF4, “Reverse the decline in ODA for SFM and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM”

Continue to support member countries to enhance their capacity to better promote forestry within government systems to be able to attract more resources for their programmes. Also pursuing a regional approach to attract new sources of donor funding to support all Pacific island countries, especially the smaller ones. In line with this, SPC, in collaboration with FAO, is implementing a Regional Forest Monitoring project funded by UN-REDD to support SPC member countries establish and maintain national forest monitoring systems. Currently working with the UNFF Secretariat to organize a Pacific workshop on forest financing to be held in Suva, Fiji, in October 2014.

2. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on progress towards the achievement of the GOFs.

**C. Contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs**

1. Please describe studies or initiatives in your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process that capture the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

No regional initiative or study so far.  
But have supported compilation of regional report, based on member countries' information, on achievement of the MDGs, including the contribution of forests.

2. What indicators have been, or could be, used to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs?

Percentage of land areas covered by forests

3. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on MDGs forest-related work.

**Section II: Review of the effectiveness of the current IAF and the future options**

1. From the perspective of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process, please provide a general evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of the current IAF.

IAF represents the global consensus on the importance of forests. Discussions/debates surrounding it have raised the profile of forests and have rubbed onto other international forums like that under the UNFCCC. Unfortunately this alone has not resulted in the creation of new sources funding for forestry despite all the discussions on the issue. There is funding available in other forest-related instruments but these only deal with quite specific areas and do not consider forestry in a more holistic manner.

2. Has the input of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process been adequately taken into account in the Forum's deliberations?

Probably.

3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?  
Please list the most important measures (maximum five):

Try to actively participate in the IAF discussions and to promote and support implementation of decisions by member countries.

4. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened regional/sub-regional component in a future IAF?

Has not established a position on this.

5. Has your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process worked jointly with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)<sup>2</sup> and/or major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.

Very good. Given the many issues and challenges faced in the use and management of land, agriculture and forests in the Pacific, it is important that we work in partnerships with other agencies, projects and programmes if we are to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes for our Pacific communities on the ground.

6. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened collaboration with CPF member organizations and/or major stakeholders in a revised IAF?

Maintain level of collaboration currently enjoyed with a number of agencies.

Continue working on building new partnerships with other agencies, programmes and projects.

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<sup>2</sup> CPF member organizations: Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFF), Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), The World Bank, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)